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ABSTRACT

Intended for regular class teachers, the booklet provides information to aid in mainstreaming the visually impaired (VH) child. Sections address the following areas: characteristics of the VH child (legal and educational definitions, common visual defects, etiology); identification and signs of visual problems (warning symptoms); the vision specialist and assessment team; behavior patterns (suggestions for teaching the VH child); and special equipment and resources (writing equipment, mathematics equipment, and audio aids and reading materials). (SBH)

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"If we can raise a generation
That accepts those of us who are different. . .
On the basis of what we can do. . .
Then
We will have come a long way
Toward equality of opportunity.
. . .Integration is needed in order to fully educate the non-handicapped
As well as the handicapped."

S. Phyllis Stearner

Billy: The Visually Impaired Child in Your Classroom was prepared by the staff of the Interrelated Teacher Education Project.

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Gayle Gear

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

What we are talking about is mainstreaming, a term you've heard a lot about. For you it is a unique opportunity to experience a whole new facet of teaching. Mainstreaming satisfies the educational needs of handicapped children. At the same time, it is providing a challenging learning situation for both teachers and students. You, the regular education teacher, will gain new insights into children and discover a different aspect of learning that will be both fascinating and personally rewarding.

MEMORANDUM

TO: (your name)

FROM: Mr. Jones, Principal

RE: Special Student

Next Monday you will have a new student in your class. His name is Billy Stewart. He is severely visually impaired. . .

Stop and think — how do you feel? Excited, anxious, curious? Are you prepared for such a challenge? What will your other students do? This last concern is probably a major one for you. The fact is, how your students react to Billy depends a great deal on you, your own attitude toward the visually impaired child.

Those feelings are to be expected, initially. But no matter how you may feel now, the special student is coming to your class, and an important first step is to be ready for him. A good way to do this is to **read**, beginning with this booklet; then read some of the other references listed in the back. Be sure to

"Because what they can't see teaches
us much about what we can see,
we share a need to learn together."

include a biography (or better yet, an autobiography) of a blind or partially sighted person. The more you know about the subject, the more confident you will be.

Secondly, **get in touch with how it feels to be visually impaired.** The best teacher is one who understands her students and the best way to understand something is to experience it. Put on a blindfold and experience the feeling of blindness. Note how it feels to move around — to deal with objects and space; also sit quietly for a few moments and become aware of your other senses — touch, smell, hearing. Above all, become aware of who you are as a person and of all the things you can do even without your sight.

After you have done these things, work with your students in doing the same, and have a discussion about your experiences. Much of the fear and hesitation about the new student's arrival will be removed by these exercises, and you will all find yourselves genuinely excited about next Monday.

Why might the visually impaired child be in your regular classroom?
Because mainstreaming is a good concept, it is working.

For many years, education for the visually impaired in the mainstream has been an accepted model that has been well supported in a number of areas throughout the country. Regular classroom teachers and vision specialists, working together, have successfully demonstrated that the visually impaired child can receive the major portion of his education in the regular classroom. Since it is possible that at some time during your career, you, the regular classroom teacher, will encounter students with visual impairments, it might be helpful to understand the types of specific visual defects, as well as how these defects may affect the learning process.

Just who are the visually impaired?
They are defined both legally and educationally for several reasons.

Legal Definition

Individuals who are totally blind and those who are severely visually impaired in one or both eyes. The legally blind are those who have a visual acuity for distance vision of 20/200 or less in the better eye even with best correction or those whose field of vision is narrowed so that the widest diam-

Educational Definition

Children are considered to be blind educationally when they must be taught to read by using braille, the optacon, or other means that do not involve sight.

Partially sighted students are those who have significant

eter of their visual field subtends an angular distance no greater than 20 degrees.

The partially sighted are those individuals whose vision in the better eye after correction is between 20/70 and 20/200.

vision problems that require some special adjustments in instruction, but can be taught to read print of regular or large size. These distinctions are difficult since a child's ability to read print or braille may depend on factors other than visual acuity, such as intellectual ability, motivation, family support, availability of specialized instruction, and presence of secondary handicaps.

The purpose of the legal definition is to establish the eligibility of visually impaired individuals to receive federal and state aid and to receive special services such as income tax exemption, access to talking books from the Library of Congress, and use of special teaching materials from state service programs. The implications for educational planning, however, require a more individualized assessment procedure. For example, a person with 20/400 vision, who cannot read letters of any size at 20 feet, may well function as a sighted person educationally and may be able to read normal size type at the usual distance with the aid of special lenses.

Two out of every 1,000 children are classified as legally blind or as partially sighted, and up to 25 percent of the general school population may have defective vision, most of which can be corrected.

COMMON VISUAL DEFECTS

Defect	Description	Results in	Can be improved by
Myopia (Nearsightedness)	Eyeball too long; focus falls in front of retina.	Child cannot see distant objects clearly; no difficulty with close work, but strains and squints to see at a distance.	Glasses with concave lenses.
Hyperopia (Farsightedness)	Eyeball too short; focus falls behind the retina rather than on the retina.	Child must shift the focus of the eye to see clearly at a distance, and shift again for close vision. He will be distracted easily, will tire quickly; he may look glassy-eyed.	Glasses with convex lenses.
Astigmatism (Blurred vision)	Distortion in the shape of the lens or of the cornea. Some light rays focus on the retina; but others focus in front, or would fall in back of the retina.	Eye strain and blurred vision for both distant and near objects.	Hard contact lenses (make the cornea spherical as it should be.)
Strabismus ("Lazy Eye")	Visual axes are not straight and one eye turns out (exotropia) or one eye turns in (esotropia.)	May cause double vision; the brain suppresses the image in the deviating eye; this can lead to dimness of vision because of disuse. Child may suffer from nausea and fatigue.	Specific medical treatment, which should be done before the age of 5 or 6.

The causes of defective vision are varied; the results for partially sighted children may vary also, like the writing on the blackboard that is too small or distorted

or the story in the reader that is blurred and confusing, or the daily headache that comes from straining to see.

You, as an observant educator, can play an important part in the identification and early treatment of these problems. Your awareness might well be the first step toward the evolving of the visually impaired child into a more eager, successful student.

Most children who have severe visual impairments are identified prior to their enrollment in school; however, a large number of children have visual problems that go undetected for years, even into the upper elementary grades. It is usually not until the fourth or fifth grade, when the nature of the subject matter, e.g., reading and map study skills, requires extensive visual work, that less severe visual defects become more apparent.

Another reason for the delay in identification may be the inadequate procedures for screening in many schools. Tests for near vision (tests of a child's ability to read at twelve to eighteen inches) are required by only a few states. Most programs are more concerned with a child's distance vision, or with his ability to see at 20 feet. Problems which can result from lack of binocular coordination (such as "lazy eye") are overlooked. The Snellen test, given in most schools, tests only the size of letters a child can read at a distance of 20 feet. Since most cases of nearsightedness do not develop until a child has reached elementary school age, a measurement of visual acuity alone, especially at preschool age, is not considered satisfactory. At preschool age, evidence of defects in binocular coordination is often present. Early detection and treatment can result in corrected vision. It is recommended, therefore, that all preschool children or children reaching school age be screened for possible visual impairment.

As a classroom teacher, you should be alert to any sign or to any symptom which suggests that a child may have a visual problem. Poor academic work, especially inadequate reading skills, can often be attributed to poor vision.

You can perform a simple but effective vision assessment at the beginning of each school year. Distance vision can be checked by asking each child to read the blackboard from the back of the room. You thus determine the distance from which each child can see the board clearly. You then test for close vision by asking each child to read from a book. You observe the distance between his eyes and the book and the manner in which he holds his head as he reads. If he reads with his head tilted to one side, this could suggest a visual defect. There are other possible warning symptoms. These may be physical changes in the eyes or face, changes in vision, or changes in behavior.

WARNING SYMPTOMS

Physical Changes in Eyes or Face

- Eyes that wander
- Drooping eyelids
- Bloodshot eyes
- Recurrent redness or watering
- Eyes that feel "dusty" or hurt
- Frequent rubbing of eyes
- Preference for using only one eye
- Preference for viewing **only** at a distance or **only** at close range
- The child tilting his head
- The child bringing objects unusually close to eyes
- Abnormal amount of frowning, squinting or blinking

Changes in Vision

- Objects look blurry
- The child can't see at a distance
- Sensitivity to light

Changes in Behavior

- The child complains of pain or ache in eyes, headaches, dizziness or nausea
- The child may become irritable doing desk work
- He may have a short attention span in watching activities taking place at distances
- The child holds reading material too close or too far away
- He may reverse letters or words

And, again, all of this is very frustrating to the child. He doesn't know about myopia, hyperopia or astigmatism. He only knows he can't see well enough, and your help in correcting this situation will be extremely valuable to his personal and educational development.

Here's another all too common vision situation. Imagine you are in the first grade and your teacher has arranged the room into different learning experiences, all color coded. However, the colors she indicates to you are not the colors you see. She gets annoyed, thinking you don't know your colors; you get upset because you aren't sure what she means. The reason for this discrepancy is a genetic defect known as **color blindness.** Found almost exclusively in males, color blindness is directly related to academic achievement in elementary school children. To a color blind child, the colors red, green, and yellow may appear as varying degrees of the same color. If you should encounter this situation in your classroom, you can creatively develop for the color blind child tasks for which success depends on criteria other than color.

As for the other visual problems — if you frequently notice any of the warning symptoms in a particular child, you should refer him immediately to the school nurse or the principal. They will refer him to a specialist who can administer additional tests.

"We need the kind of stance taken by Annie Sullivan, Helen Keller's teacher, who was caring and challenging, not sentimental and protective."

A.W. Chickering

WHO IS THE SPECIALIST?

Ophthalmologist (oculist)
a medical doctor

Optometrist
a highly trained person who has specialized in eye problems. He does not have a medical degree.

Optician
a craftsman who makes glasses

Orthoptist
a non-medical technician

HOW DOES HE HELP?

He is a medical doctor who specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases of the eye. He is also licensed to prescribe glasses and measure visual functioning.

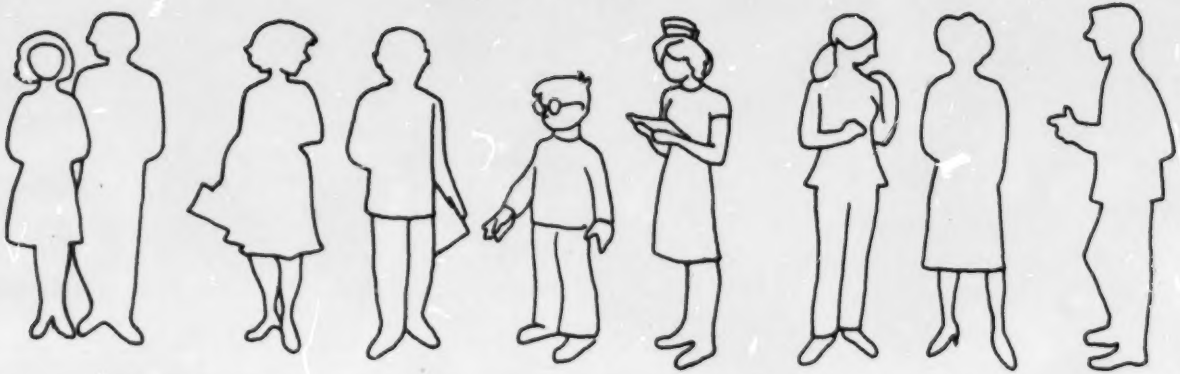
He is licensed to measure visual functioning and to prescribe and fit glasses. When disease is suspected, he refers patients to an ophthalmologist.

He fills the prescriptions of ophthalmologists and optometrists.

He directs prescribed exercises or training to correct eye muscle imbalances. He usually works under the direction of an ophthalmologist.

After determination has been made concerning needed services for the visually impaired child, you can carry through the recommendations. This will probably mean conferring with the **vision specialist**, the special education teacher who provides specialized knowledge and experience gained from working with visually impaired children. The vision specialist helps the visually impaired child with various skills, such as typing and learning braille. He will also work with the child on his listening skills which will enable him to make efficient use of his hearing, as needed for listening to recorded texts and tuning in to sounds of his environment. To encourage the child to develop independence and a feeling of self worth, the vision specialist helps him with daily living skills, such as grooming and organizing his belongings. He may also instruct him in orientation and travel skills. The vision specialist is but one member of the **assessment team**.

Assessment Team



Parents

You

Vision Specialist

Child

School Nurse

Teacher Aides

School Counselor

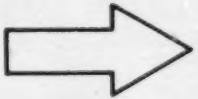
Assessment should be an ongoing process, to easily and quickly provide relevant information for continuing educational decision-making. While you plan and direct most of the educational activities, the vision specialist acts as a supportive resource person, **sharing and interpreting information, answering questions, offering suggestions, and supplying special materials to you.** Everyone on the assessment team shares responsibility for providing the instructional program and the supportive climate necessary for the visually impaired child to accomplish two essential things: meet instructional objectives and develop a positive self-image. These two are really inseparable, for how the child values himself has a great influence on his performance. You will be able to encourage him to learn, despite his handicaps of partial sight or blindness. Your genuine enthusiasm for his success will be a tremendous positive support for his view of himself and his abilities.

"In the main, I do not view myself as handicapped,
although I am blind.
I find handicapped areas here and there in the course of my life,
as an explorer might discover islands in the sea.
I have learned to navigate the seas. . ."

Hadi Madjid

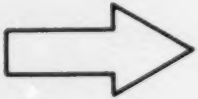
You may notice behaviors in the visually impaired child that may set him apart or cause concern. They are only results of his sight loss, not of his intelligence.

Children who have significantly reduced vision often have limited environmental experiences in mobility and in spatial orientation as well as in acquiring acceptable behavior patterns. Opportunities for developing skills in these areas are necessary.



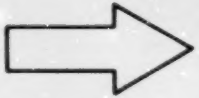
He May Appear Disoriented or Clumsy

The partially sighted child may be able to function well visually in some situations but not in others. For example, he may be able to see well at very close range but be unable to read a street sign or to see the writing on the blackboard; he may also have difficulty seeing in bright, glaring light.



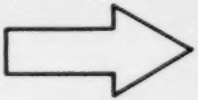
He May Be Able To See Close But Not Far Away

Slowness in responding to a situation must not be misunderstood as intellectually retarded behavior. For example, if a child's field of vision is very narrow, he may not be able to integrate all that is happening around him; he may, therefore, appear to have slow responses in some situations.



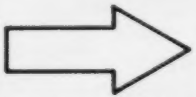
He May Be Slow To Act

Adults should not hold a child back from normal developmental experiences. Sometimes the reactions of adults to a child with partial vision actually create limitations on his social and emotional development, causing him to appear very immature.



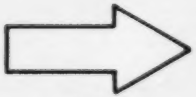
He May Appear Socially and Emotionally Immature

Partially sighted children have impairments that vary greatly. Individual decisions must be made on the type and number of instructional adjustments necessary, and on the degree of achievement to be expected. Your expectations should not be lowered because of the impairment; these children should be encouraged to develop positive self-concepts and behavior appropriate for their age group.



Different Impairments — Different Expectations

The visually impaired child may hesitate to become involved in various activities, especially recreational ones. Your acknowledgment of his fear, and consultation with the vision specialist to determine the best way for him to participate, will do much to get him involved.



He May Shy Away From Recreational Activities

Behavior Patterns and What You Can Do

Your acceptance of these behaviors is the first step in establishing a working relationship with the child. With that gained, you can both work toward developing the more positive, and eliminating the less desirable, aspects of his behavior.

"Blindness does not set a [child] apart from the world
anymore than strawberry-blonde hair or flat feet.
He is still an individual, still a distinct personality.
His interests are in the sighted world
and he wants to work with and among sighted people."

Karsten Ohmstad

Although it is impossible to make general statements about specific situations, some teachers who have had experience in teaching a blind child and sighted children together believe that it is better not to emphasize the fact that one of the children in the class is blind, just as you would not point out the child who has red hair or who is short. At an appropriate time, when the blind child is not in the classroom, you might conduct a brief discussion during which **you guide the class in understanding that, although a blind child cannot see, he can participate in most activities and can achieve the same goals as other children by using different means.** You can help the children to see that everyone has different gifts to use and different obstacles to overcome, and when we concentrate on using our abilities to their fullest extent, we can accomplish a great deal.

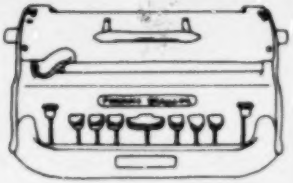
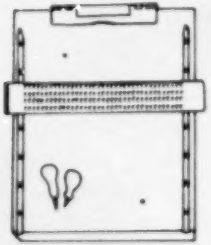
Other Helpful Suggestions

- Maintain a **relaxed and natural atmosphere** so that the child will develop in a natural and relaxed way.
- A visually impaired child is eager and able to do most of the things done by sighted children. Be sure to **give him opportunities** to do as much as possible.

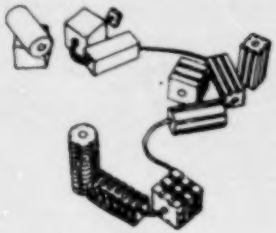
- Be certain to **describe activities carefully** and to be consistent in giving directions because a blind child must rely on the use of other senses. Your improved skill in giving directions will help other children as well.
- Be careful not to place more emphasis on a child's blindness than on his normal abilities. **Use the same standard** in grading the blind child as used with his sighted peers. Give him no special discipline privileges. Lack of sight does not absolve him from necessary correction. Classroom duties and privileges, work assignments and standards of behavior should, in general, be the same for all children.
- **Expose the entire class to other avenues of learning,** involving the senses of touch, hearing, smell, and taste. For example, give the class an opportunity to discover many interesting sounds outdoors; listen for leaves blowing in the wind, for birds singing, for a train whistling, for a dog barking, etc. Recall the smells of cookies baking, of a Christmas tree, of coffee perking, and of roses in the garden. Remember that developing awareness through the senses can be a bonus for everyone.
- A blind child can walk at ease with a friend by placing his hand lightly on the other child's arm at the elbow. After a child has formed a cognitive map of the school and can independently go where he needs to go, e.g., upstairs, to the bathroom, to the lunch room, or to the playground, then **consistent independent performance should be expected.** Overprotection is discouraged.
- Some legally blind children have limited sight. Visual perception is a process which must be learned to some degree. **No matter how little sight a child has, encourage him to use it.** Residual vision may be demonstrated by light perception, by color perception, or by object perception. The use of the sight a child has does not impair or aggravate most eye conditions. Many legally blind individuals can, and do, use print as their means of reading.
- Try to assist the blind child in **developing feeling and association about color words.** Even though he cannot see the colors, he may acquire an awareness of how color words are used and of how others feel about these words, e.g., fire is red and hot, water is cool and blue. Be sure to compliment a blind child when he wears a color that is becoming on him.

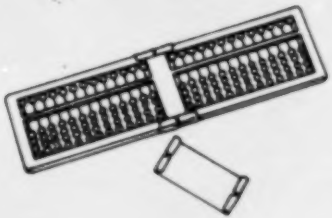
You know that your visually impaired student will need special materials. What are they and how should they be used?

Varied types of equipment, from many sources, are available for use in teaching visually impaired children. As a child reaches each stage of learning, different items will be appropriate and helpful. You can assist in determining appropriate use of the aids listed below. As a creative teacher, you may find ways to use these in teaching all of your students.

WRITING EQUIPMENT	Name	Description/Use
	**Braille Writer**	Resembles a typewriter. Has six keys which produce the six raised dots which form the basic braille cell.
	**Braille Slate and Stylus**	Two-layer metal frame, approximately 1½ inches wide. It is composed of small, box-like slots, each with six holes. Paper is placed inside; the dots are imprinted on the paper by placing the stylus in the appropriate holes. It is used in the third or fourth grade, or after the braille writer has been mastered.

MATHEMATICS EQUIPMENT





Typewriter — Standard models with the 26 letter alphabet, number and symbol keys. It is introduced in the fourth or fifth grade.

Objects — Buttons, blocks, clothespins for fundamentals of number lessons.

Braille Dominoes — Standard dominoes, with raised dots to represent the numbers, for teaching number combinations.

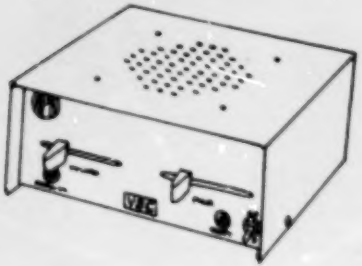
Flash Cards & Number Games — Regular flash cards and number games with added braille equivalent. Visually impaired and sighted children can use them together.

Arithmetic Slates — Rectangular boards, usually of plastic, resemble waffles. Cubes with standard braille numerals on 5 sides, enabling one to set down any of the 10 number symbols to fit into the rectangular openings.

Abacus — Frame with rows of counters, used by all children, helpful in developing a simple basic understanding of numbers by reasoning rather than by rote memory.

Judy Clock — Wooden clock; simulates the motion of real clocks. Large gears move when the minute hand is turned. The minute hand must make a full turn before the hour hand moves. Attach tabs with braille numbers for the visually impaired child. Introduced in the primary grades.

AUDIO AIDS AND READING MATERIALS



Talking Book Reproducers

4-speed phonographs can be borrowed with talking books (books which are read and preserved in the form of records).

Speech Compressors

Devices which speed up recorded materials without changing the pitch.

Headphones

For one or two students to work individually, without disturbing the rest of the class. Used with talking books and tape recorders.

Optacon

A device which transforms print into letter configurations of vibrating reeds that are read tactually.

Large Print Books

Books for the partially sighted; letters are larger and bolder than standard print. Should be used only when necessary; encourage student to read standard print books.

Other Resources

American Foundation for the Blind, 15 West 16th Street, New York, New York 10011. A primary resource of charts, booklists, films and pamphlets on subjects such as "Braille Alphabet and Numerals," "Helen Keller," "How Does a Blind Person Get Around?" and including the film "What Do You Do When You See A Blind Person?" This is a short and funny film that appeals to children, which shows sighted people's most common mistakes in interacting with blind people.

American Printing House for the Blind, Inc., 1839 Frankfort Avenue, Louisville, Kentucky, (502) 895-2405. Publishes braille books, music, and magazines; large-type textbooks; talking books and magazines; cassette tapes; and educational tape recordings. Manufactures special educational aids for blind and visually handicapped persons.

Association for Education of the Visually Handicapped, 919 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107, (215) 923-7555. A membership organization open to persons professionally concerned with, or interested in, the education, guidance, vocational rehabilitation, or occupational placement of visually handicapped persons. Assists in efforts to improve material and methods of teaching visually handicapped persons and to expand their opportunities to play an active role in society.

Division for the Visually Handicapped - Council for Exceptional Children, 1920 Association Drive, Reston, Virginia 22091, (703) 620-3660. A professional organization of teachers, school administrators, and others concerned with children who require special services. Publishes periodicals, books, and other materials on teaching the exceptional child.

Howe Press, Perkins School for the Blind, 175 North Beacon Street, Watertown, Massachusetts 02172. Telephone: (617) 924-3434. The people at Howe Press are a valuable resource. They can show you all the ways braille reading material is produced.

National Federation of the Blind, 218 Randolph Hotel Building, Fourth and Court Streets, Des Moines, Iowa 50309. Write to the National Federation of the Blind to get the address of your state or local association as well as the addresses of other agencies and resources in your area.

Seeing Eye, Inc., Morristown, New Jersey 07960. Write for copies of their free comic book about the training of seeing-eye dogs, as well as the film, "Happy, Forward."

Source Information. The Division for the Blind, Library of Congress, Washington 25, D.C., or the resource teacher can provide addresses of talking book machine lending agencies as well as the 31 regional libraries which distribute books for the blind. When blind children register with regional libraries, they automatically receive the **Braille Book Review** and **Talking Book Topics**, both of which list all new material in the libraries.

"I never put boundaries around my awareness. . ."

Hadi Madjid

Books and Pamphlets for You

Braddy, W. **Anne Sullivan Macy - The Story Behind Helen Keller.** New York, Doubleday, 1933.

Carroll, Thomas J. **Blindness: What It is, What It Does, and How To Live With It.** Boston, Little, Brown & Co., 1961.

Davidson, M. **Louis Braille: The Boy Who Invented Books for the Blind.** New York, Hastings House, 1972.

Dickman, Irving R. "Living with Blindness." Public Affairs Pamphlet #473, Public Affairs Pamphlets, 381 Park Avenue South, New York, New York 10016.

Dickshoff, J. **Milton on Himself.** New York, Oxford University Press, 1939.

Johnson, Ysobel. **A Blind Child Becomes a Member of Your Class.** New York, American Foundation for the Blind, 1961.

Keller, Helen. **Midstream: My Later Life.** Garden City, New York, The Sun Dial Press, 1937.

Keller, Helen. **The Story of My Life.** New York, Doubleday, 1954.

Krents, Harold. **To Race the Wind**. New York, C.P. Putnam's Sons, 1972, (Movie, "Butterflies are Free," based on this book).

Monbeck, Michael E. **The Meaning of Blindness: Attitudes Toward Blindness and Blind People**. Bloomington, Indiana, Indiana University Press, 1973.

Napier, J., Kappan, D.L., et al. **Handbook for Teachers of the Visually Handicapped**. Louisville, Ky., American Printing House for the Blind, 1975.

Ohnstad, Karsten. **The World at My Fingertips**. Bobbs-Merrill, 1942.

Books for Your Students

Anderson, G.W. **The Blind Connemara**. Macmillan Inc., 1968.

DeGering, Etta. **Seeing Fingers: The Story of Louis Braille**. David McKay Co., Inc., 1963.

Eddy, Lois. **Stevie's Other Eye**. McDoccell, 1962.

Ericsson, Mark K. **About Glasses for Gladys**. Melmont Publishers, 1962.

Graff, Stewart. **Helen Keller - Toward the Light**. Garrard, 1965.

Hart, M. & McQueen, N. **Mary Lou and Johnny: An Adventure in Seeing**. Franklin Watts Inc., 1963.

Hunter, Edith Fisher. **Child of the Silent Night**. (Biography of Laura Bridgman). Yearling Books, 1963.

Meltzer, Milton. **A Light in the Dark: The Life of Samuel Gridley Howe**. Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1964.

Rounds, Glen. **The Blind Colt**. Holiday House, 1960.

Taylor, Theodore. **The Cay**. Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1969.

Vance, Marguerite. **Windows for Rosemary**. E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1956.

Wetheridge, Elizabeth. **Dead End Bluff**. Atheneum Publishers, 1966.

ABOUT SCHOOL

I didn't want to go to that school. My mother told me all the other kids could see. I didn't want to go because they would laugh at me. But she said it was a law and that it would be good for me. I didn't believe her, but I went. I felt very cold and funny inside when we went into the classroom. Nothing was familiar; I could smell the chalk and the pencils and everywhere was the heat of bodies and the scraping of shoes. But no one talked, and that felt very strange. I knew they were looking at me; I wanted to run away, but I clung to my mother's hand and that made me feel safe. Suddenly she let go — "Don't leave me here!" I thought, "Please take me home with you!" Then there was another hand — it was strong and warm. "Hello, Billy. I'm your teacher. Here is your desk." So I sat down. She called the roll and started talking about a happy poem. She didn't talk about me at all, and I knew the others were watching ***her!***

I am glad I came to that class. I didn't know I could do so much. I learned how to read and write and how to play dodgeball. I learned about China and space ships and I heard some great stories. I made many friends, and you know what? Some of them even learned braille with me. And the teacher — she was so nice. I think she really liked us. . .

Billy

You know who he is; you know how to work with him. The visually impaired child is simply another student in your classroom, eager to be challenged, eager to learn, eager to be accepted.

For him, you may be a bridge across the hazy expanse of wonder. . .to the solid ground of knowing. You are his teacher; he is yours. You teach him about numbers and poetry and Waterloo; he teaches you about challenge and accomplishment. You test him, and he puts you to the test. He'll become a stronger student and you'll be a stronger teacher. And as he goes on to create a successful life, you will know you have shared in its achievement.